
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA



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**Honda Praises BART, VTA for Reaching Agreement on
Extension to San Jose, Vows to Fight for Funding in Congress**

San Jose Congressman Worked Behind Scenes to Promote Cooperation, Regional Consensus

Washington, DC— U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) today praised BART and VTA for reaching an historic agreement announced today on the extension of BART to Milpitas and San Jose. Honda, a member of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, played a key role in bringing BART, VTA, and city officials together in order to build the consensus needed to make the BART extension agreement a reality.

"Congressman Honda has been a strong supporter of BART to San Jose during these negotiations," said Willie B. Kennedy, President of the BART Board of Directors. **"Now, we look to him and our Bay Area delegation to carry the BART torch to Washington, D.C. for the essential federal funding."**

"We have reached another major milestone in moving BART to San Jose and Silicon Valley," said San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales. **"Many people have worked very hard to reach this milestone, and I deeply appreciate the help we received from Congressman Mike Honda toward achieving a long-term transportation solution for commuters throughout the entire Bay region."**

"I salute BART, VTA, MTC and Mayor Gonzales for their hard work in hammering out a balanced and economically sound agreement that will greatly benefit Santa Clara County, as well as the thousands of Bay Area residents who commute to Silicon Valley each day," said Honda. **"Federal transportation law rewards sound planning and regional consensus. I am very proud that we were able to stay true to these principles in building an agreement that will serve as the framework for improving our quality of life here in the South Bay— a region that contains several of the nation's most congested transportation corridors."**

The agreement announced today between BART and VTA is an important step in making the BART to San Jose Extension a reality. The agreement must next be approved by both the BART and VTA boards, which are expected to approve the agreement soon. Once approved by both boards, the agreement must be approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and included in their Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). This is expected to take place on December 19, 2001. Once included in the RTP, Honda and others will fight to include the BART to San Jose project in the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21)— a process that has already begun that will conclude in 2003.

“Today’s agreement will help me and my colleagues from the Bay Area delegation to present a unified front in our effort to obtain federal authorization and funding for this project during the reauthorization of TEA 21 next year,” continued Honda. “The people of Santa Clara County strongly support BART to San Jose, our economy needs this extension— this vitally important project merits the full support of the federal government.”